

Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria Australia

Number 90:

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Connect

connect

Reflections on 15 years of supporting student participation

In this

FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

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Cover

Analogies for student participation in the '90s?

**"All of us are competent;
none of us are competent enough!"**

This Issue

Fifteen years ago this month, *Connect* began with the following statement:

HELP YOURSELF - CONNECT

In recent years, a number of projects have sprung up that involve young people actively and meaningfully in their own education, projects that emphasise participation over passivity. These projects vary in style, format and emphasis. What is such a youth participation (project) is often difficult to define, especially from outside.

There are, for example, a number of newspapers, newsletters and magazines that are largely controlled by the young people putting them out. They differ from the traditional school magazine in those issues of participation and control - they make an active attempt at every point to involve the students in the operation of the project.

There are cross-age tutoring programs that, by their very existence, assert that young people can play a central role in their own education and in the education of their peers.

There are whole schools that involve students in government - not just the traditional advisory SRC, but participation in decision making by the whole school body. These tend to be the smaller schools or the schools that have broken into smaller units.

There are drama programs, poetry readings, book publishing efforts - all of which have young people active in their education. All are united in the belief that people learn by doing and that young people **can** do things - they have capabilities.

Now, to people reading that statement, that might appear obvious, but it is a statement that in many schools would bring a scoffing remark from teachers.

This newsletter is produced in response to requests for information and the desire to share information. It is an affirmation of the belief in projects centred in the ability of students to participate in their education. But it is not meant to be a theoretical journal. Rather it is to be **your** newsletter, to carry information of what you're doing, to **CONNECT** up projects. If it serves a use, it will survive - if not, it will last few issues.

Connect 1, December 1979

This issue of *Connect* reflects on a number of the issues and projects documented in the last 15 years. Where have we come? What have we lost? Where are we going? What is the future for student participation approaches? And for *Connect*? A number of contributors comment on what they wrote 5, 10 and 15 years ago.

There are some notable absences from this issue - eg media presentation and student research projects have been important, but just didn't happen to be featured in the articles around the 5, 10 and 15 year-ago points. The next issue (deadline end of January) will continue this forward-looking reflection.

On to the next 15 years - together!

Roger Holdsworth

THE FARM EXPO

Students Organising an Environmental Tour of Myuna Farm

Thirty students in my class are currently organising an environmental tour of the Myuna Community Farm (see **Connect** 89, October 1994) for other students at Doveton North Primary School. I am writing this on their behalf.

This project is the result of an idea initiated by students for the other students at the school, Myuna's nearest neighbouring school. My role as educator has been very much that of a 'learning manager', as the children question each other about possibilities and their outcomes. Other educational institutions or groups

might like to try similar approaches at other venues around the wonderful city of Melbourne.

Doveton North is a working class school with its share of problems. Half of my class have experienced the separation of their parents; 75% have their parents receiving the Educational

Maintenance Allowance. Students are crying out for attention in one way or another. To fulfil the educational needs of these students, programs are developed so that they can feel a real sense of self worth.

The Program and Plan

Over a period of six weeks, the children and staff met regularly to plan a tour of the farm to be conducted by the host grade for the other nine grades at the school. This idea was entirely based on the suggestions of the students in the host grade. The tour was made by students, for students.

The students wished to alert the school community to five environmental issues and used the Farm to make their points (see later). Educationally, this gives the children an opportunity to see their contributions as having real purpose in their education.

Progress of their achievements during this project is all recorded on video. The children from the host grade took all the responsibilities themselves, from operating the video camera to preparing and delivering drinks for our visitors during the week.

We have children in this grade who range from some having severe learning difficulties, to those operating at a year 8 level, yet we prove that, regardless of this fact, we can all achieve success and learn from each other.

This was their vision prior to the Expo:

- Thirty students are planning and running a tour of the Community Farm for the other nine grades at Doveton North Primary School. This will be held during the week of November 28th to December 2nd.
- Each of the nine tours should take one and a half hours.
- Class sizes average 30, so our visiting groups will be placed into five groups of six students. Three students from the organising grade per group will act as the Tour Guides.
- Each group will visit one of the five 'stations' where two 'experts' from the organising grade will be positioned for the duration of the day. These 'experts' will discuss environmental issues with the visitors and engage them in a hands-on learning activity.

Bird Hide 'expert' Lynne Karmanchuk getting 'focused' on the cormorants, spoonbills and ibis.



Our Initial Plans: (these have since been altered)

Five environmental issues have been selected. They are:

Issue	Experts	Hands-On Activity
Wetlands	Carl Kuti and Kristina	Planting trees
Recycling (Methane gas production)	Andrew and Aaron	Worms Gathering waste
Dandenong Creek	Jacqui and Dina	Clear debris/ collect samples
Dry Stone Walling	Cameron and Tony	Make mini-wall
Domestic vs Native Birds	Belinda, Lynne and David	Bird Spotto

- Bob Barker, Manager of Myuna Farm, has agreed to supply the materials so that each of the 250+ visitors can contribute to the making of a two metre dry stone wall. The technique of making such a wall is a very old art that can be attributed to the convict days of European-settled Australia.
- Bob, Bill, Sharon Nicola (Education Officer at the Farm) and other Farm personnel have agreed to meet with our 'experts' and train them in presenting a five to ten minute program that will outline the environmental issue they have chosen.

Organising Activities

These activities are currently going on at the school by children in the organising grade:

- map making, showing our intended route and the environmental stations;
- making permission notes;
- ticket making;
- mosaics about the environmental issues;
- posters about the above issues;
- brochure for the farm, based on environmental issues.

We needed from the Farm:

- help with script writing for the experts;
- trees and ground preparation for the planting;
- permission for bird-hide experts to make after-school visits to the wetlands;
- costs and availability of the Farm train for the MAC grades;
- several more grade visits by the organising grade in order to estimate times required to complete the visit, and for rehearsal.

Outcomes

The following things have already occurred as a result of the children's discussions with staff at the Farm:

- There has been parental involvement on each of our visits.

- Mr Bill Thomas of Melbourne Water has put in a submission requesting \$6000 investment in the preparation and planting of trees down at the wetlands. Bill's proposal also allows \$1000 to be set aside to cover the running costs of the week.
- This project will now be run in 1995 and beyond, to involve over 1000 students from both primary and secondary schools in the Doveton Cluster (six schools). This would be done on the same basis: by students, for students. Suggestions have also been made for us to cater for Senior Citizens, community groups and so on.
- Bill has suggested that we use equipment that Melbourne Water can supply, so that we are able to test the salinity of water.

There was one other development that 'blew me away'!

During our second visit involving Bob Barker, Bill Thomas and Sharon Nicola, the students came up with what I thought was an extraordinary suggestion. Thursday November 10th was a curriculum day at our school and was student-free. Realising that I would not be present at all, they organised for each of the adult experts at the farm to meet with them at 1.30 pm on that day. If I had suggested at the beginning of the year that these students were to do a day's work on a student-free day at our school, they would have laughed and thought that I was in need of some sort of assistance.

So you see, as I outlined in the initial comments, this idea that was initiated by students for students, is really gaining momentum.



Once the experts, David King, Belinda Pratt and Lynne Karmanchuk, had identified the birds, they made identification posters which have been attached to the bird hide.



Parent Information Evening

Later, the suggestion to run a parent information evening was made. The decision took no time for the class, but a nervous and restless night's sleep while the students had to await the decision by the Principal - a decision based on a submission that they had written.

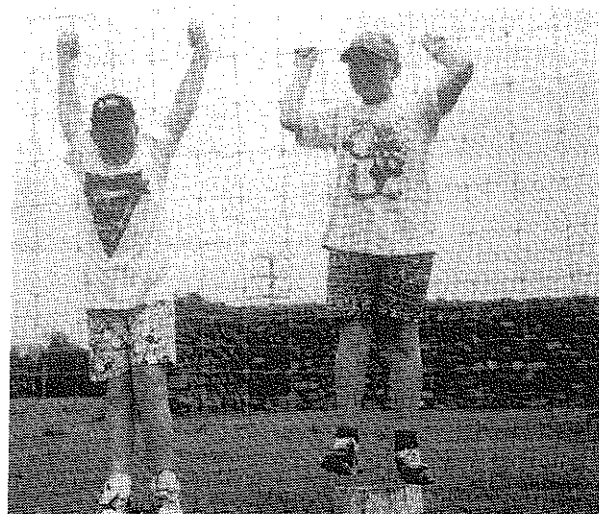
The result?

Illustrations:
clockwise from top:

Dina Cansevic and Jacqui Storey collecting water samples for salinity testing.

Preparing for tree planting. Two days later, this ground was fully prepared and 300 trees were positioned.

Dry-stone wall experts Cameron Stephens and Tony Simmons waiting for their visitors to arrive.



Notice of Important Information Evening Being Run by Students at Doveton North

On Wednesday 23rd November from 7.00 to 8.00 pm, the STUDENTS of 5/6 OSH are holding a special information night in the Library for parents, teachers and other community members.

Our main topic for the evening is our next Expo. This Expo is our 4th Expo and our last for the year.

Some time during the year, your child/children would have attended at least one of these Expos. Expo #4 is being held at the local Community Farm, Myuna. Your child will be shown around it by our 'experts'.

During the evening, you will learn about our five stations we have located around the Farm for our use:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Station 1 | Dry Stone Walling |
| Station 2 | Wetlands |
| Station 3 | Bird Hide |
| Station 4 | Dandenong Creek |
| Station 5 | The Farm's Recycling System |

You will also hear about how we initiated a submission for \$6000 from Melbourne Water.

Postscript

As I write, the Expo is still a week away. All of next week will be devoted to the students visiting the farm daily and rehearsing their roles as either experts or tour guides. Each of our previous visits has been videorecorded and show the discussions and money proposals discussed with the adults.

I had to ask permission from the students to write this in 'adult language' on their behalf.

Garry O'Shanassy
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YESTERDAY
10 years ago

KIDS CAN DO REMARKABLE THINGS

When your principal asked me for a title for my talk today, I gave him that pithy little quotation off the cuff. He must have taken me seriously as I notice it is part of your outline for today. I think it is worth remembering and maybe after today's activities you will think so too.

Firstly, I plan to talk to individuals today. Individuals working with young people; not subject teachers, members of departments, curriculum committees or what have you. I'll tell you why.

Over the past three years, the school where I work has undertaken massive changes in search for effective curriculum. We embraced a series of sound principles (mainly based on the Schools Commission's **Schooling for 15-16 Year Olds - The Adaptive School**), modified existing structures and embarked on a range of innovative and exciting projects. We set a perfect stage for imperfect actors.

Now, that is a separate topic and I don't plan to go into that today, but do you know what I have been forced to recognise? That curriculum development starts with individual teachers getting their act together, drawing together and working together; kids who want to be part of the show; and each addicting each other with the habit of success.

And by curriculum development, I don't mean the usual noble rhetoric "into the eighties" because the development I am talking about cannot continue in a system whose participants are so strongly motivated to resist change. The change I am talking about is like any forbidden pleasure - it's fun while it lasts, so enjoy it while you can.

I mentioned the habit of success. Success in schools. Don't get to think that in the light of what you see happening, are told or read of happening, about resistance, alienation, breakdown, burnout, chaos, discipline - that it's not possible, because it is. And by success, I mean

broad definitions: achievements that leave kids, their parents and their teachers feeling pleased with themselves. A sense of excitement, worth and direction about what they are doing. All kids, not just the 'brightest'.

Kids do remarkable things. A few teachers and some kids about the stage you are at, looking for ideas, thought up and succeeded in an amazing project, and it may be of interest to you. The idea was to build a boat over two years, not just any boat, but a replica gaff-rigged fishing boat used in their area many years ago.

The kids fished out some old folk who were familiar with these boats. Some had worked on them, some just knew about them, and fortunately the kids found some who had spent their earlier years building them. You can imagine how eager those old timers were to talk about a major part of their life to a bunch of enthusiastic kids armed with notepads, cameras and tape recorders. Those young people were able to put the infant project into a fascinating historical context.

In the process, the kids were given the name of a large company who had actually started out as a builder of these boats, and even though it had diversified, some senior partners remembered their beginnings with pride. One, a naval architect, took particular interest in the students' ambitious and exciting project. An interest that went beyond a condescending nod of the head and extended to the preparation of a set of working drawings for the boat. Plans for a replica, using some modern materials and, above all, simplified for students to follow.

Now, you can have all sorts of ideological discussions about people of influence, power cores and so on, but remember, this project did not claim (not that it was really thought about) to be socially critical. Those kids set out to build a boat and if existing social structures could be

TODAY
1994

It amuses me to see that quotation in print again. If ever an off the cuff comment became a mission statement, that one did. Not that it didn't deserve to; just that we usually like to think that successful things are planned, and that one wasn't. I am not even sure who coined the phrase; the thing I am sure about is that fifteen years have not made it any less applicable to the young people we are dealing with. Give them the opportunity to perform in something they believe is worthwhile, and they will do it remarkably well.

The thing that has changed in fifteen years, as I see it, is that the opportunity to provide the necessary learning structures is so much more difficult. A lot of that speech was based on an imaginary student project, and while I still believe it was entirely possible, based on what we did, it would be extraordinarily difficult to get it up and running now. I could not imagine, for example, being game enough to propose it to a staff of teachers with the hope that they take it on. We take ourselves too seriously nowadays. Gone is the reckless abandon that so characterised those innovative and exciting youth participation programs of the 'eighties. And gone too is the ease with which diverse approaches to learning were accommodated. The Kensingtons, the Huntingdales and the Lynall Halls have disappeared or joined the ranks, and education is the poorer for it.

My view may be overly pessimistic. For the past two years, our student enterprise has been riding a high, manufacturing curriculum material

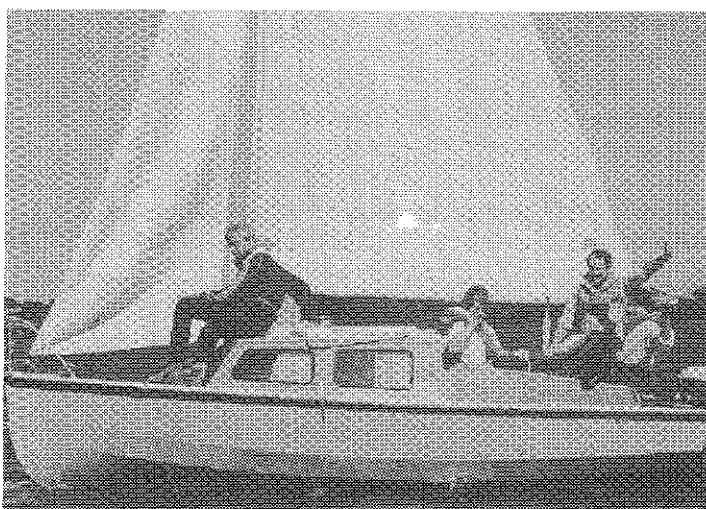
... IF THEY HAVE REMARKABLE THINGS TO DO

that was new, exciting and in demand. —We won awards and acclaim, we enjoyed the rewards of success, (mostly on board chartered yachts), we were on display at major exhibitions here and interstate, we even got a feed at Government House and shook the man's hand. Then, in true 'eighties fashion, the bubble burst. As Les Carlyon wrote: "Few creatures are more easily pulled down than those who cling to an idea whose time has passed". The enterprise project has been stuck with unsold stock, no trip, no workshops for teachers (a highlight of the students' year), and me with enough egg on my face to make the Chinese an omelette.

The days of the student enterprise are not over however. In fact, the student project which is emerging from the egg shells is set for national and perhaps international success, but that is another story. Suffice to say, albeit in a roundabout fashion, that schools have changed. They are operating in survival mode, they are concerned about being seen in the correct light, and while they nod politely at the notion of student councils and youth participation, their brain is bound by frameworks and their heart shies from risk in any guise.

It reminds me of the climate of survival I saw in some American schools several years ago. I had been inspired by John Holt (weren't we all), and was ready to see where it all happened, not in black and white, but in glorious living colour. How disappointing. The teachers all knew who I was talking about, and while they paid lip service to his ideas, the reality was so different. They were marching to the tune of national standards, keeping in step with testing and grade scores, and although they heard the beat of a

used to advantage, they would be. That naval architect had influence and the project was fortunate to have, at an early stage, business people who were pleased to assist. Assistance which led to the students forming a cooperative, registering a name and working through the process of raising capital, budgeting and buying materials.



You can imagine that there was no difficulty in getting the papers involved and other media quickly followed with excellent coverage of activities so far, and plans for the year. It is not surprising that the kids and their project started to get tremendous community support. The reason, of course, was that it was imaginative, interesting, and made sense to ordinary people. (A lot of what we want kids and their parents to get interested in only makes sense to us, remember.)

So the boat was underway. The old craftsmen didn't realise it at first, but they were taking over the teaching role. You couldn't keep them away from the project and the kids loved working with them. 'Smokos' replaced recesses and parents did the canteen bit another way by making sure 'the workers' had a good morning snack, hot scones and all.

Momentum was developing and the group (they met regularly with each other and various advisors) started to look further down the track. You may be surprised that they didn't

plan it all first. No, they knew that the development of a good idea needs a foundation of action, not too much planning. All sorts of things begin to happen when the project is underway and, apart from anything else, kids work better with the concrete than the abstract.

Anyway, they began to plan a trip in this boat and film the whole thing.

By working and talking with the old timers, the kids could see some exciting possibilities of producing a film, using the boat and the stories of those who worked them. Before long, a group of students took

on the task of writing a story and as the boat was a replica, the story too would be based on events of the time. Like the building of the boat, the story was to become a major challenge, made possible by enlisting the willing assistance of professionals. A noted Australian writer and several historians were pleased to work with the kids and the results were amazing.

The movie too became a major activity and another group of kids accepted this challenge. They could see the possibilities of producing a first-rate movie, and sought the special expertise to enable them to plan the sequences, select locations and so on. Some inter-department scheming at upper level enabled a group of trainee film-makers to work with the students as part of their course.

It became apparent that yet another group of students would be needed to handle all the administrative aspects. The purchasing of timber, fastenings, sailcloth, rope, as well as organising a host of other things

related to the overall project. Things like progress reports, interviews, arranging visits to film locations, and seeking sponsorship from several Australian companies. The project was progressing well. It had a healthy ring about it and the people involved - young, middle-aged and elderly - were all glad to be involved with such apparent success.

The timing was right, too. We have developed an avid interest in our history, so the movie was in demand even before it was finished. For all its lack of initial planning, it was a good project from whatever way you looked at it. It involved active participation from kids and their parents, deserved and received active support from the community, offered all kids the chance to succeed and share in the real rewards of success, including money.

Pardon the pun, but it would be wrong to say it was all plain sailing. You can imagine the demands on the students' time that the project claimed, the timetable flexibility it required and the attitude of those not involved. It's not surprising then that some who should have known better, knocked it. They reminded all and sundry that the kids are "missing out on important subjects" and that it will not enable the kids to get jobs.

All quite true of course.

But it didn't offer a year of pretentious academic rigour and still not deliver a job either. Some kids were affected by this knocking, maybe because it expressed the way they really felt. They had got tired of it and, as some of the other kids were giving them a hard time, they decided to pull out. Remember that success breeds success, but it also breeds spite, jealousy and envy.

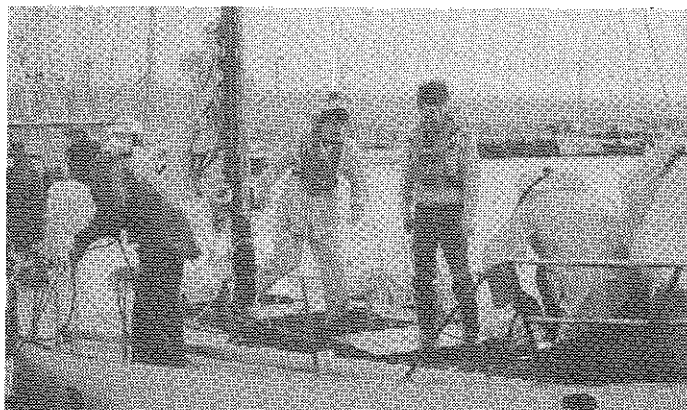
However, most saw the project through. Two years of risk, hard work and, as the project was bigger than anybody had imagined, two years of massive commitment of effort, time and money. For many, pulling out was unthinkable despite the risks, because

their credibility and even their jobs were at stake. And beside that, too many people had given so much to make it a success. It had to succeed and it did.

In the latter stages, several big companies responded well. They saw some limited advertising potential but their main reason for supporting it was to be seen to be involved with a venture that showed youth in a positive and successful light. They no doubt upheld it as an example of their own ethic: imagination, risk and hard work deserves success.

Some gave money, but most provided a service or materials of incalculable value. One company loaned a helicopter and pilot for some difficult filming; another donated film and processing. One commercial television company made make-up and costume people available, as well as some technicians and equipment.

So the film was a great success and was added to the list of valuable Australian Heritage films. The boat was sold to a tourist centre and the kids, as far as I know, still think proudly of their most memorable school event.



And now comes the remarkable part. I notice some wondering why they haven't heard of the project or seen the film. It is because it hasn't happened yet. The whole thing is a figment of my imagination. The boat design was a Lakes fishing boat; the architect was from Bull's Shipyard, who also gave the kids the names of some old boat builders. The Rotary Club of Sale provided the financial advice; the repertory society, production assistance; the Melbourne School of Television and Drama, the film expertise; Kodak, the film; Esso the helicopter; and Sale Technical School, the resources and people who tied it all together and made it happen.

different drummer, they were not prepared to step out of line.

I use this analogy deliberately, because it is a type of 'fear', or 'under threat' mentality that characterises the scene here now. Barricades are going up around faculties within schools, suggesting that the enemy is among us. At other times it is clear that the threat comes from the Directorate who, while capable of promoting the image of monumental advances, are also desperate to hide the losses, or worse still, in a questionable and curious sort of logic, refer to them as victories. Officers in schools become confused as to where their loyalties lie; they become suspicious of those above them, and feel powerless to quell the restive mood in the troops they command. A sort of 'us and them' paranoia prevails, and the fighting spirit falls. Troops have seen the ranks thinning out. The reckless corporals who amused and inspired us for so long with their daring innovations, have taken discharge papers and become soldiers of fortune. They don't amuse us any more; they make us uncomfortable. We have to admit, while taking on their duties, that they are a lot happier than we are.

Well, at least wars don't last forever. School climate is a dynamic thing. Feelings are not set in concrete, and for all the uncertainty, teachers are resilient and adaptive creatures. I am not sure we will see the return to those heady days of Disadvantaged Schools, TEAC and PEP, (can you imagine current money being put up for a participation and equity program?). The rationalist ideology is so pervasive, it's even in the air. The Germans, who have a word for everything, use the word 'Zeitgeist', and it means 'spirit of the age'. This age is economically driven like no age previous. A different criterion is used to judge educational value; if the program does not 'pay its way', or meet the narrowly defined utilitarian parameters, it has become out of step. Rationalisation too often means the shift of focus from the general to the narrow, as evidenced by the loss of music and art

programs and the rise of vocational thinking in schools.

All this of course, given the possibility that it is a reasonable perspective, does not auger well for **Connect**. Reading through back issues in order to get a feel for this article, there is so much that contains the subtle beat of that different drummer. And, whereas much of the material published had a direct influence on what I did and could do at school, I now have that awful feeling that it doesn't fit. When teachers feel they are losing control in their workplace, it is unlikely we will see the spread of student government; when schools are becoming more hardware and less people oriented, young people will be expected to come on line as recipients, rather than participants. Similarly, as schools become more insular and the curriculum more centrally driven, we probably will not see the **Foxfire** approach become widespread practice, and when teachers and schools are trying to retain a semblance of participation in the real sense of the word, youth participation in education becomes a misnomer. There is a grave risk that much of what **Connect** has stood for for the past fifteen years, dare I say it, represents an idea whose time has passed.

Not that it deserves to pass; far from it. And to those who wonder what **Connect** has stood for for one and a half decades, issue 79 (February 1993) will give some indication of the spread of valuable ideas that are as appropriate now as they ever were. I am not suggesting that reading an index represents the magazine's contribution to education. This index is much more than a list of valuable ideas. Almost every article represents not just the idea, but the actual working example of young people participating in the most important stage of their lives. Behind those articles are activities that have enriched the lives of many young people and those who work with them. How do I know? Because I have seen on several occasions the effect on young people of seeing

Maybe my imagination worked a little overtime, but let me give you another quotation to remember before I set about helping you believe it's all possible: "It is better to aim for the stars and hit the wood-heap, than aim for the wood-heap and hit the dust."

Do you people know that in this room is about half the total imaginative, creative, practical and intellectual talent in Sale, with the organisational ability and the credibility to enlist the talents of the other half? Just think about what you could do with that in developing your curriculum.

Remember that you have to get something underway first, and this is where I want to appeal to the individual in you, the individual imagination and the personal belief that you can make it happen. It has to be started and seen to be a goer before you can expect the real involvement of others' talents. Remember too that sound ideas being developed, not just talked about, gather a momentum of their own and that kids addicted to the habit of success don't give up easily.

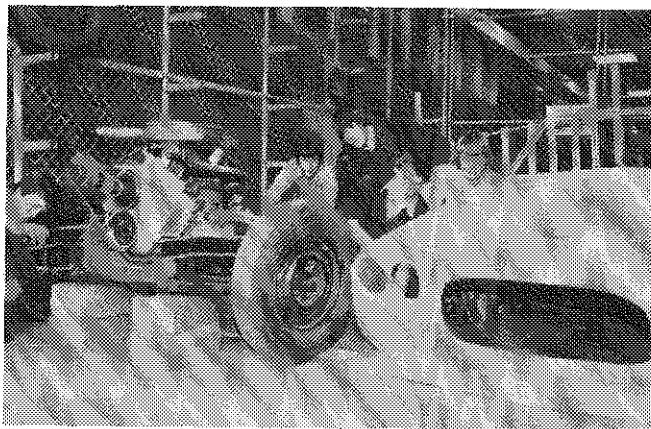
So much for that. Now, I am aware that you have expected more than a display of imagination. I was not invited from the other end of the state to talk about things imagined, but about kids doing remarkable things and having remarkable things to do. I don't want to sound dramatic but what follows is an outline of a remarkable achievement and, believe me, it is all real.

In October, a group of students and some adults fly out of Melbourne to spend three weeks visiting the United States of America. It represents a climax, a reward for tremendous dedication, commitment and sheer hard work. It represents an investment in time, money and effort by a group of kids and their parents in a nearly worthless, rusted motor car becoming a gleaming roadster valued at several thousand dollars.

Above all, it represents: Kids can do remarkable things if they have

remarkable things to do.

You may have heard about Youthcraft Products and the Studebaker project, because it has not gone unnoticed by the press. Youthcraft Products is the registered name of the student cooperative established in 1981 to enable students at our school to raise capital, purchase material, manufacture a product and sell it for profit. It also means a postal address, bank account, ordering and



payment system. It's not a model enterprise, it's the real thing. Money related to this trip, in excess of \$20,000, will be dealt with by the students - not to mention the hundreds of transactions to finance the project. Give kids real experiences that demand their best and you have stimulation not simulation.

All this is important, but the aspect that is equally important is that these kids own the project, not just legally, but financially, morally and in every other way. They own the pleasures, and they own the problems. And of course they own the rewards. Never underestimate the continuing commitment kids will show to something they have chosen to invest time and money in for their own reward. And remember, too, that kids addicted to the habit of success don't give up easily.

Don't think "Youthcraft Products" started in a big way. It started as nothing more than an idea in a teacher's head. A group of kids developed it with him, experimenting by trials and errors, but always discovering. They discovered, for example, in those early times, that old fundamental of manufacturing: a product well designed and produced in a way that equals value for money

will sell and return a profit. They discovered too, that their efforts could be measured and valued in another way - money instead of marks.

It should be no surprise to learn that it spread from a group to a year level, from a single activity to several activities, all special and successful in their own way. Successful because the notion is sound - kids busy with challenging and profitable work, parents aware and appreciating a newfound sense of excitement in their kids (and don't underestimate what that means to them) and teachers discovering some of the rewards (and apprehension) of the youth participation tightrope. "Youth craft" didn't just allow the kids to participate, it depended on it.

And I mean to use the term tightrope, because that's what it is. Art Pearl, who probably knows more about youth participation than anyone, describes it as proposing, and dealing with counter proposals; of pushing and backing off. The balance is critical. The balance of your leadership and their ownership has to be established and maintained or the kids will lose interest, the project will founder and you will own the project, complete with problems.

The Studebaker project then is a youth participation project that, by more good luck than good management, I will admit, maintained that vital balance, because the kids did not lose interest and it has not foundered. I will give you an outline, rather than a blow-by-blow description of the project.

In February of last year, a group of students who had chosen to spend one day per week working with fibreglass (as part of Youthcraft) decided to purchase a 1966 Studebaker sedan from another teacher for \$250. Although the mechanicals were generally sound, the body was rusted beyond repair. They removed the entire body shell and set about cleaning and repairing engine, brakes and suspension. Several scale models were designed and built by the students and one of these was selected for the full-size body. The roadster body was built in fibreglass and this is nearing completion now.

Community support, by way of donation of materials and services, has

been amazing. Several companies have made a contribution toward this roadster without regard to costs in any way. The twin exhaust system, for example, is all polished stainless steel, mufflers and all. The paint and finishing materials were all donated as was the time of professionals who supervised several students in its final preparation.

Let me tell you this. The project I imagined for you people and the contribution by individuals and companies, is entirely possible based on our experience. We were not successful in every instance - some were more keen to contribute than others. And this help did not only come from companies. The kids had reason to enlist the support of several State and Federal ministers in their attempts at gaining some reduction from the normal air-fare. Without exception, the Ministers responded and did what they could, and their replies could not have commended the kids more highly. The sort of support I have outlined in 'your' project is more than imaginary - it is real and just waiting to be asked for.

Before I wind up, let me remind you about another avenue of support - the kids' parents. Next to the kids themselves, they're the greatest resource a school can have and often the most neglected. The number of parents and the type of assistance given to the Studebaker project, has opened my eyes. Doing things that they feel comfortable doing and things that they know are needed. I don't know if any of you have ever needed to get passports for a group of kids, or if you realise what a task it can be. Some parents are doing that job right now with a dedication and thoroughness that I could never achieve. I wonder how many dedicated, resourceful and talented parents in this town are just waiting for the project that needs them to work alongside the most important people in the school - their own kids.

I am hardly game to mention it here, but seeing Rod Moran couldn't make it, I will. I have reservations about the universal hankering after computers in schools, particularly by maths/science people, because of the potential they have to dehumanise, sophisticate and further separate the school from the community it serves. Such priorities have the potential to

their activities in published form. I have seen, for example, students huddled trying to read the single copy at once, and I have been witness to the renewed sense of purpose provided by the article about their project. Those students needed this recognition because almost without exception, they were breaking new ground, pushing the borders of 'mainstream' to encompass the necessary and possible. I am sure that nearly every entry in the index represents a similar huddle of young people. **Connect** helped them to succeed, and thereby has enriched the lives of thousands.

Although this sounds like a eulogy, **Connect** will not die. Changes in school climate may ultimately and of necessity prompt greater levels of participation, and the role of the newsletter becomes even more crucial. And besides, the lifetime subscribers, while they have not put up their \$1000, (see the back page, every edition) are massed there in spirit. Many are losing the fire in their belly, but they are not burnt out and the embers can still be fanned. They have read, and will continue to read with interest; they will follow with the same passion the activities whereby young people are being empowered; and above all they will contribute articles to confirm the statement that 'going to school is not enough, having a say is important, and having real participation is vital'. These pedagogical stalwarts are lifetime subscribers to what **Connect** represents; they will continue to subscribe to ensure the activities don't become ideas whose time has passed.

*Mervyn Edmunds
Cobden Technical School*

**TODAY
1994**

further inhibit the vital linking between the kids' parents and the school. My plea is: whatever project you devise, please keep it people-centred and make it realistic and understandable in ordinary peoples' minds.

Let me ask you to consider this final point in looking at your curriculum: equality of outcomes. This isn't just my thinking incidentally. It is the current thinking of a lot of top brass in education. Participation and equity. We have talked about participation: this is the equity part. As Joan Kirner puts it: equal right to succeed in whatever way it is defined. It means all kids having a chance to succeed, from the

kid who punches the eyelets in the sail, to the kid who plays a role in the movie. Each doing what they can and succeeding at it.

Joan Kirner also believes another condition for improved learning (which is surely why we "develop curriculum") is the removal of failure from our schools and everything that goes with it. Kids want to succeed, and don't ever think that they haven't the necessary perseverance, motivation or wherewithal, because they do. The thing that many of them haven't got at the time we deal with them is what most adults haven't got either: the ability to stick at something after repeated

failure.

I hope some of this proves useful in your imagining, your planning and your developments, towards setting up those remarkable things for kids to do. Remember to look far afield for inspiration, beyond the classroom for direction, all about for assistance, and within for the conviction that it can be done.

*Merv Edmunds,
PO Box 100, Cobden 3266*

*This was the text of a talk at
Sale Technical School, Vic; August 1983*

from Connect Number 30, December 1984



THE FUTURE: 15 YEARS ON

What will **Connect** look like in 15 years?

The first question to put is: Will **Connect** still exist in 15 years? The answer is: Yes - of course it will!

Connect has been, is and will continue to be part of a global underground promoting values of cooperation, the realising of potential, and encouragement.

Connect has always been concerned with the energy that lies within, and has been able to show the

realisation of this energy in myriad projects. This will continue.

But **Connect** stands for much more than personal 'empowerment'.

At base, it stands for the construction of a truly democratic society where the contributions of all are valued.

Connect is part of a global network that has no dogma. In the next 15 years, it will become more aware that it is part of a global-ecology-network.

It may seem odd to speak of these things, given the prevailing political climate here in Victoria in 1994. Yet it is my view that the support Kennett draws upon is due more to a fear of the new than to anything else. It will pass away.

Each person on the planet will come to realise the great responsibility they have for nurturing our home, our planet, our womb.

*John Martin
Warracknabeal*

YESTERDAY
15 years ago

STUDENTS PUBLISHING

TODAY
1994

The Golden Shaft: The Light of Day at Last

On November 22, 1979, at Ballarat East High School's assembly hall, Mrs Nina Valentine, freelance interviewer for the ABC and *Courier* book critic, launched **The Golden Shaft**, a 272 page book of recipes, remedies, oral history, social comment, interpretation, poems and stories contributed by over 300 students at the school.

Any student, regardless of ability or year level, was encouraged to have something in the book. Because of this, the quality of the work is uneven, but a compensating factor is the sheer range of experiences, abilities and forms of writing. To me this gives the book life, strength and vivacity that one does not usually encounter in any book.

So all the work is that of the students' except for a couple of staff contributions. The look on some of their faces when they read their own work in a **real book** - indescribable. But what it meant to them - let them speak for themselves:

"The enjoyment of seeing my story in the book is a great thrill to me. It makes me feel like a famous writer. I wrote *The Lost Recorder* which is quite true. I hope people like my story." (year 7)

"Extremely satisfying to know my poem is in 1000 books." (year 9)

"It makes me proud that I am part of the school book. It makes me feel good because it is a chance in a million." (year 9)

"How do I feel about having something in 'our book'? I think **The Golden Shaft** was a **golden** opportunity for students and parents and the people of Ballarat generally to excel and express themselves in literature, poems etc. I have a poem and a piece of prose in the book and I was and still am terribly excited about seeing my name and work in print. It was a valuable experience because it tended to build up my confidence and I doubt if the opportunity to be a part of a book like this would have been open to me anywhere else at any other time. This no doubt will set an example for other schools." (year 10)

What can we say about these comments?

There is a strong feeling of pride in their own achievement, and also a pride in their school.

There is a sense of power and self worth ("**my story** in a **real book**").

There has been appreciation of hard times and struggle on many fronts - writing, editing, layout and selling.

There is great pleasure in the thought that so many people will read their work.

There is a very generous and giving spirit in the comments. Kids have

loved to read the work of others and have gained an idea of the range of talent and ideas in the school.

What are the wider implications of doing this? The justification of course need not go beyond the feelings aroused in the kids. Yet there is more at issue. I can do no more than quote "three basic instructional objectives" that Eliot Wigginton said one should be needful of in projects of this type:

"I think a project has to be attentive to three basic instructional objectives. One is that it pays particular attention to whatever basic skills you're mandated by the school system to teach, 'cause at its basic level, what it is is another vehicle for getting the skills which we've been mandated to teach, into a kid's head. It's another way of doing the same old job.

"The second one is that it pays real attention to whether or not the student is developing a consciousness about the concept of community ...

"And the third one is the whole idea of whether or not the project pays sufficient attention to a child developing a true, solid concept of self, self-worth, self-image, competence - I can do, I can perform, I can act, I can make a contribution, I'm of value as a human being ... you know ... I am, I have worth."

(interviewed by Roger Holdsworth, *Secondary Teacher* No 14, September 26, 1979)

I don't really care what projects kids are involved with, but I hope they can say such things as: "I didn't know I could do it", "I am proud of this", "I have given something to the world", "I have made something".

- Does the project bring out the potential in kids?
- Does it make them surprised at their talent?
- Is it something **real** for them?
- Is it something they will remember for the rest of their lives?

We must keep these questions at the centre of our teaching.

I was lucky of course - I had hundreds of kids willing to contribute pieces of work, I had the ready cooperation of other teachers, and a cooperative principal. Maybe a second **Golden Shaft** will come out; maybe others schools in Ballarat will contribute. Maybe something else, entirely different, will happen in the future. Who knows? Above all, we must hold fast to the truths of the children, the things that fire them up, that bring them to life.

John Martin
Ballarat East High School
from *Connect* 2, February 1980

Those words towards the end of my 1980 piece still seem so important: what Wigginton said, and my questions: "Does the project bring out the potential in kids? Does it make them surprised at their talent?" These things are eternal aren't they?

Young people doing projects is happening far more often now. Communications Projects are occurring throughout schools. For example, kids are confident with videos and making videos themselves. I believe the VCE philosophy has had a big influence on education - in the sense of encouraging kids to set their own goals, involve themselves in learning that is relevant to them, and the encouragement of communication skills. At the same time, this has put teachers under enormous stress, and teachers have less and less time to plan and set up student work of this kind.

In 1993, I was appointed Student Welfare Coordinator at Warracknabeal Secondary College. I am working away, with the help of others, to make Warracknabeal a secure learning environment where kids can feel safe from bullying, teasing, sexism and so on. We are trialing peer support programs, vertical group form assemblies and focusing on levels of literacy across the school. We are developing closer ties with various agencies outside the school and also with parents. We conducted an information and discussion session for parents of children with learning difficulties and got a 100% attendance.

I see my involvement in this type of work continuing for the foreseeable future. But a fourth book? ... No ... I don't think so.

John Martin
Warracknabeal Secondary College
December 1994

**AUSTRALIAN
CURRICULUM
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION**



**Biennial
Conference**

Curriculum '95

***Reconstructing the
curriculum —
choosing the future***

Registration enquiries:
Michael Sullivan
Conference Management
Services,
University of Melbourne,
Parkville VIC 3052
Phone (03) 344 4490
Fax (03) 344 6122

Program enquiries:
Bill Stringer
Conference Convener,
Institute of Education,
University of Melbourne,
Parkville VIC 3052
Fax (03) 347 2468

to be held at
The University of Melbourne
11-14 July, 1995



AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM STUDIES ASSOCIATION

CURRICULUM '95

BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Reconstructing the curriculum — choosing the future

The University of Melbourne, 11-14 July, 1995

About ACSA

The Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA) is a national body with membership drawn from early childhood centres, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, parent and student organisations, education authorities and educational publishers.

- ACSA provides a national voice on curriculum issues
- ACSA encourages and promotes curriculum research
- ACSA provides forums for the exchange of information on curriculum developments
- ACSA promotes self critical curriculum practice

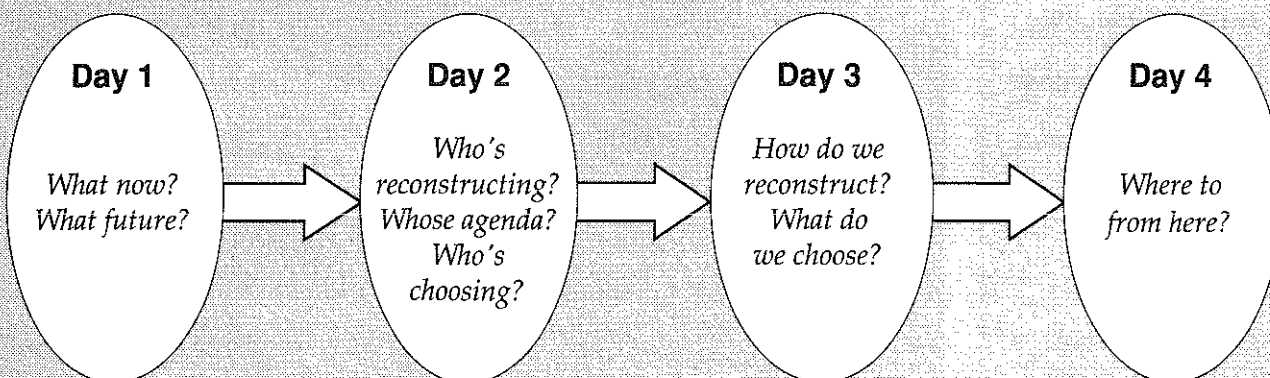
Conference themes

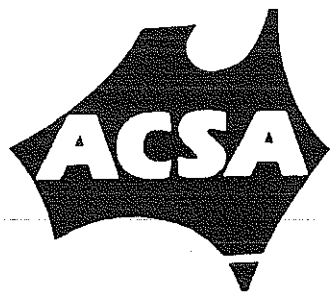
- Lifelong Learning
- Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Reporting
- Equity, Access and Opportunity
- Education/Curriculum, Resources and the Economy
- Technology and Education
- Internationalism
- Partnerships, Alliances and Links
- Autonomy, Governance and Devolution
- Quality and Accountability

Types of presentation

- Extended workshops
- Papers
- Challenge panels
- Keynote addresses from international and national speakers
- Networks and Interest Groups
- Special Events

Key Focus Questions for the conference





AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM STUDIES ASSOCIATION

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The University of Melbourne, 11-14 July, 1995

Program Outline: Tuesday 11 to Friday 14 July 1995

Tuesday	9.00 – 10.45 am	Registration
11 July	9.15 – 10.30 am	Network Coordinators and Workshop Leaders
<i>What now?</i>	10.45 – 11.30 am	Welcome and Conference Opening
<i>What future?</i>	11.30 – 12.30 pm	Keynote Address
	12.30 – 1.30 pm	Lunch
	1.30 – 2.25 pm	Papers and Demonstrations
	2.30 – 4.00 pm	Workshops
	4.00 – 4.30 pm	Afternoon Tea
	4.30 – 5.30 pm	Special Event
	6.00 – 7.00 pm	Reception
Wednesday	9.00 – 9.30 am	Challenge Panel
12 July	9.30 – 10.30 am	Keynote Speaker
<i>Who's</i>	10.30 – 11.00 am	Morning Tea
<i>reconstructing?</i>	11.00 – 12.55 pm	Workshop
<i>Whose agenda?</i>	1.00 – 2.00 pm	Lunch
<i>Who's choosing?</i>	2.00 – 2.55 pm	Papers
	3.00 – 3.55 pm	Papers
	4.00 – 4.30 pm	Afternoon Tea
	4.30 – 5.30 pm	Special Event
	7.00 – Midnight	Conference Dinner — Great Hall, Arts Centre
Thursday	9.00 – 9.30 am	Challenge Panel
13 July	9.30 – 10.30 am	Keynote Speaker
<i>How do we</i>	10.30 – 11.00 am	Morning Tea
<i>reconstruct?</i>	11.00 – 12.55 pm	Workshop
<i>What do we</i>	1.00 – 2.00 pm	Lunch
<i>choose?</i>	2.00 – 2.55 pm	Papers
	3.00 – 3.55 pm	Papers
	4.00 – 4.30 pm	Afternoon Tea
	4.30 – 5.30 pm	ACSA General Meeting
	6.00 – 7.30 pm	Garth Boomer Public Lecture and Garth Boomer Award
Friday	9.00 – 11.00 am	Theme groups, discussion and panel
14 July	11.00 – 11.30 am	Morning Tea
<i>Where to from here?</i>	11.30 – 12.30 pm	Final Keynote Speaker
	12.30 – 1.30 pm	Lunch



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Cost of Conference

Full details of registration costs for the conference, including early-registration rates (received by 31 March 1995), and concessional rates, are shown on the registration form at the back of this brochure.

Air Travel

Travel Strength Canberra and Qantas Airways have agreed to provide discounted air fares in the range of 25% to 40% off published full economy fares. To obtain the maximum benefit of a 40% discount you would need to advise Travel Strength of your requirements at the earliest possible date.

A toll free number **008 818 384** is available for all conference participants to contact Travel Strength for Qantas air reservations. Please support the Conference Organisers by using this booking arrangement.

Child Care

The Conference will provide day child care for children from 3 months to 6 years of age. Please indicate on your registration form numbers and ages of any children requiring child care and the days they will require it.

Accommodation — University

Accommodation has been reserved at **Ormond College**, one of the largest residential colleges at the University. The cost for bed and breakfast in a single room with shared facilities, is \$45 per night, and must be paid with your registration.

Accommodation — Hotel/Motel

Within walking distance of the University a number of establishments offer more luxurious accommodation. The Townhouse Hotel, Elizabeth Tower Motel and the Country Comfort Old Melbourne Hotel are offering special rates to delegates attending the conference. Please indicate you are attending the conference when dealing directly with these three establishments to obtain the discounted rates. Conference participants are requested to make their own reservations. Hotel/Motel addresses are as follows:

- The Townhouse Hotel,
701 Swanston Street, Carlton 3053.
Telephone: (03) 347 7811 Fax: (03) 347 8225
- Elizabeth Tower Motel,
Cnr. Elizabeth Street & Grattan Street, Melbourne 3000.
Telephone: (03) 347 9211 Fax: (03) 347 0396
- Country Comfort Old Melbourne Hotel,
5-17 Flemington Rd., Melbourne 3000.
Telephone: (03) 329 9344 Fax: (03) 328 4870



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Conference Dinner

The Conference Dinner will be held at
The Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria,
St Kilda Road
7.00 for 7.30 pm

The cost of the dinner,
including all refreshments is \$65

Bookings may be made on the registration form.
Dress — semi-formal.

Parking

Parking is not available on campus during the conference. Commercial car parks are available within walking distance of the university. Parking is available for delegates staying at Ormond College.

Conference Publications

All delegates will be sent a program booklet prior to the conference. This will contain full details of the program, including abstracts for workshops and papers. The post-conference publication will include keynote addresses and reports/recommendations from workshops.

Further Information

Enquiries about **registration** for the conference should be directed to:

- Michael Sullivan, Conference Management Services,
The University of Melbourne, Parkville 3052.
Telephone (03) 344 4490 Fax (03) 344 6122.

Enquiries related to the **conference program** should be directed to:

- Bill Stringer, Conference Convener,
Institute of Education, The University of Melbourne, Parkville 3052.
Fax: (03) 347 2468

Cancellations

Cancellations must be made in writing by Friday 30 June 1995. In that event, refund of monies paid will be made less an administrative fee of \$30. Cancellations received after this date and up until Tuesday 4 July, will receive a refund of 75% of monies paid. Should a cancellation be received after Tuesday 4 July, only 50% of monies paid will be refunded. No refunds will be made for non-attendance at the conference.



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Optional Tours while in Melbourne

Pre- Conference Tour

Tour 1: The Penguin Parade — Phillip Island. Monday 10 July 1995, afternoon and evening.

Warm clothing is essential for this tour. Delegates will be picked up at Ormond College in an air-conditioned coach at approximately 1.20 pm, returning at about 11.30 pm.

Phillip Island is not only the home of one of the largest colonies of fairy penguins in existence, but also is the home of seals, koalas and mutton birds. You will visit The Nobbies, a cluster of tall rocks where some 5000 fur seals live and breed. The highlight of the tour will be the parade of fairy penguins at dusk returning from the sea after a day's feeding. They come onto the beach, waddling within touching distance, as they make their way to their burrows on Phillip Island. The tour will stop at Cowes on the return visit for supper. Supper is optional and not included in the tour fare of \$66 per person.

Post- Conference Tour

Tour 2: 'Puffing Billy', wine-tastings, and Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary. Saturday 15 July 1995, all day tour.

Delegates will be picked up from Ormond College at approximately 9.15 am and will return to Ormond College at about 5.30 pm.

You will travel through the beautiful Dandenong Ranges to Belgrave to board "Puffing Billy", the oldest steam railway still operating in Australia, and the sole surviving locomotive designed for narrow gauge tracks. The train takes you to Menzies Creek where you will rejoin the coach for a visit to Fergusson's Winery for a spit-roast luncheon and wine tasting. After lunch you will visit the famous Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary, recognised as one of Australia's best. Wander through bushland and view kangaroos, platypus, wombats, lyrebirds, colourful parrots, emus and other species at close quarters. The cost is \$84 per person, which includes lunch, wines, Puffing Billy journey and entrance to the Sanctuary.

Tour Bookings

To book your place for either of these optional tours, please complete the details on the Conference Registration Form, opposite.



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Conference Registration Form

Title (Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr/Prof) Surname Given name

Organisation

Address

..... Post Code

Telephone (W) (AH) Fax

	Registration received by 31 March '95	Registration received after 31 March '95	
Full registration for ACSA Members	\$200	\$220	\$
Full registration for non-members	\$270	\$290	\$
Full time student registration	\$55	\$75	\$
Parents not in paid employment	\$120	\$140	\$
Conference Dinner Number of persons @	\$65		\$
Special dietary requirements			

Childcare required Number & ages of children

Days (please circle) Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday (am)

Accommodation at Ormond College (please circle)

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8 July	9 July	10 July	11 July	12 July	13 July	14 July	15 July

Other nights Number of persons

Number of nights accommodation @ \$45 per person per night \$

Optional Tour 1 persons @ \$66 Optional Tour 2 persons @ \$84 \$

TOTAL \$

CREDIT CARD DETAILS: (please circle) Mastercard Visa Bankcard Cardholder

Credit card number: Expiry date Signature

Please send registration form with payment made out to **ACSA '94**, addressed to Michael Sullivan,
Conference Management Services, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3052 Fax: (03)344 6122

STUDENTS: *Partners in Curriculum?*

Can students be partners in curriculum development, implementation, evaluation? What are the barriers to a true partnership? How can they be overcome?

The Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA) Conference provides a rare opportunity to discuss possibilities for the development of a true curriculum partnership with students. I would like to suggest four approaches around the Conference, and invite you to develop them with me:

Student Attendance at the Conference

Are you coming to the Conference? Come along with active student/s from your school!

At past Conferences, there has been a small and involved group of students in attendance, taking part in workshops, presenting student views on a variety of subjects.

This Conference again provides the opportunity for a practical demonstration that students are and can be involved in discussing and debating the important curriculum issues affecting us all.

Previous Conferences have also shown that students need Conference support: a chance to meet and discuss amongst themselves, a place to call 'their own', preparation and a chance to get information about issues before and during the Conference (see below). It is intended that Curriculum '95 will offer all this support.

Student registration costs have been set at a substantial discount; some subsidies may be available - ask the Conference organisers for details. It should also be possible for students to approach their SRC to request Conference sponsorship. In this way, the student is also seen as a delegate to the Conference.

I am anxious to support students in attending the Conference in any way possible. Let me know if you need further information or advice.

Co-present a Paper or Workshop About Some Aspect of Students as Curriculum Partners

The Conference documents included here contain a call for workshops and papers. A broad workshop is already being planned around the theme: **Students as Curriculum Partners**. However, it would also be valuable to have other papers and workshops, which outline and report on practical projects where students are curriculum partners. It would be fantastic to have papers and workshops co-presented by students and teachers.

Note that the deadline for submission of proposals for papers and workshops is 3 February 1995.

A Conference Workshop

As noted above, I am considering coordinating a 6-hour workshop exploring the theme of **Students as Curriculum Partners**. This would be co-presented by a number of people currently or recently involved in various aspects of this topic. I am thinking that it would work through stages including:

- *what* partnership? *why*? what future for partnerships? what future *without* partnerships?
- *which* students? how to extend the idea of participation beyond student leadership?
- *how* can we develop such partnerships? what are the practical issues?

I am now looking for interest from people who would like to be involved as presenters or participants. I am also looking for ideas and responses around the topic. Please contact me as soon as possible - particularly before 3 February.

A Preparatory Student Participation Workshop?

A request from students at previous Conferences has been for a preparatory session that introduces the issues to be met during the Conference. This could also be combined with a short 'student participation workshop' which would allow students and support staff to meet to discuss current issues and plans in areas of student participation. The last such workshops were held in 1980 and 1981!!

There has been some interest in having such a session on Monday 10 July and the morning of Tuesday 11 July at The University of Melbourne. It would be fairly 'low key', with participants responsible for their own travel, accommodation and eating arrangements (just arrange to come to the ACSA Conference two days earlier). We are thinking of a planning session around Easter and a formal invitation and call for response shortly after that e.g. in the April **Connect**.

But we would like to know **NOW** if you think you'd be interested to attend. If there's no interest, then there'll be no workshop; if there's a small amount of interest, we can have a small workshop; with strong interest, it could be a wonderful occasion.

If you would like to respond to any of these ideas, or talk them over, please contact me:

mail: Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070
phone: (03) 489 9052; (03) 344 8585
fax: (03) 344 8256
e-mail: roger_holdsworth.insted@muwayf.unimelb.edu.au

Roger Holdsworth

IN PRAISE OF THE STUDENT VOICE

"Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilisation of knowledge."

A N Whitehead

On this the 15th anniversary of **Connect**, I wish to pay tribute both to the editor and to its many contributors. In **Connect** No 60 I wrote that this journal kept alive the idea that schools and local communities could be places where students learnt to construct knowledge through cooperative and participatory forms of learning. I have had no reason to change this view. However, the 1990s has seen the emergence of different forms of student and teacher work, through a more centralised curriculum, powerfully entrenched within a subject-based logic, thus mounting a strong challenge to the general teaching and learning models presented in **Connect**.

Connect has an established educational pedigree. The cognitive learning research of Lev Vygotsky, Kurt Lewin, John Dewey, Jerome Bruner and Arthur Pearl could be found reflected in the programs published by **Connect** during the past 15 years. The theoretical premise within youth participation programs argued that the individual developed within a changing culture, in interaction with others, in the context of culture and society.

Thus the student was both an agent of change and an agent to be changed. Student responsibility, and the development of the student voice in decision making and problem solving, have always been taken seriously by teachers working within this institutional learning model.

What has changed during the past 15 years is not the need for this cognitive learning model, but the massive change in the social context of schooling. State government policies in Victoria have responded strongly to a new de-regulated, free-trade, global market, by framing policy to connect the institutional practice of schooling with the market place. This self-management policy has translated calls for 'choice' for parents, as consumers within a market oriented relationship.

Comparative data from the UK and from New Zealand argue that, in reality, the school does the choosing, and unselected students are prone to social drift and exposure to risk. New forms of assessment and surveillance at years 11-12 demand large commitments of time to a subject-based curriculum. Curriculum for years 7-10 is increasingly influenced by a trickle-down effect from the organisational imperatives demanded by years 11-12. Alternate forms of learning and school rituals at years 7-10 in particular are being eroded by this restructuring by stealth.

This construction of risk for students can be viewed within the new curriculum directions in that schools will produce hard working, self-absorbed students, committed to forms of narrow, self-isolating, competitive individualism. These 'clever' forms of schooling may produce competent workers, but not necessarily full citizens.

Training students in the skills of individual competitiveness without the balancing values and language of public responsibility, is a way to effectively eliminate the discourse of public life and human values.

The loss of the student voice in school forums denies both the ability to learn how to participate in decision making, and a perspective that could change student life in schools.

The challenge for **Connect** and teachers interested in more democratic forms of schooling and methods of teaching, will be to construct a balance between the requirements of centralised government 'guidelines', and the needs of students and the local community. Teachers, parents and students all need to regain a voice in the wider scheme by shaping and reshaping policies in the service of local school improvement.

School 'Mission Statements' are now sites of policy importance within the new agenda. It is here that the balance between central and local policies can be debated and decided.

This does mean that school forums will be sites of contestation over important educational values. This also means the necessity to clearly understand the informing principles (dare I say 'theory') underpinning cooperative learning models, and how they can expand into more exciting combinations appropriate for a broad range of learning objective from P-12. This includes 'basic skills' as well as more complex forms of problem solving and the social goals of schools.

The classroom of the future could deliberately construct its organisation for students to work in pairs and larger groups, within different time frames, in order to solve problems that address real and important issues. In this form of democratic classroom, there is a balance between curriculum designed to help individuals solve personal problems and curriculum organised to help citizens solve problems they share as community members.

If the emphasis is too much on the personal, the school will repeat the mistakes of the 1960s, and not bring to student attention the impossibility of individualising personal issues in an unravelling social world. Teachers and students in this new and rapidly changing context will need to regain a more professional voice in deciding what is to be defined as important knowledge.

If a range of teaching and learning models are to be useful, they must be embedded within overall school goals. In particular, the cognitive learning model needs to extend the full range of school curriculum.

Finally, my recent work has been concerned with two areas of curriculum concern: student decision-making, and students' rights and responsibilities. I make the following brief points in summary of work in progress:

Democratic Schooling and Participation in Decision Making

A democratic education is active participation in learning. It is also participation in decisions that affect the student's life. Cooperative education is an important component in a democratic education, but it is also a major component in the new progressivism as evidenced in UK educational reforms.

Cooperative education is not a panacea. It is useful only to the extent that it is incorporated into a coherent framework and guided by a broadly encompassing educational theory. Cooperative education works if the cooperation is directed toward significant enterprises that meet all the criteria of democracy and the actions

allow for spontaneity and individual cognitive growth.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students need rights in schools and they need to learn their associated responsibilities. Without rights, schools become, for some, the difficult places that critics perceive them to be. This is especially important as models of control such as assertive discipline, and the extended use of school suspension have increased dramatically.

Those who do well in schools without guaranteed rights, need those rights to understand the world as it is for many. Rights are not merely protection for the individual; they are the foundation on which defensible

civil society is based. To teach about rights without practising rights is to promote hypocrisy. Schooling will not improve if students are denied freedom to express unpopular opinion, if they have no rights of privacy, if there is not due process - presumption of innocence - or if they have no protection against cruel and unusual punishment. Presently these rights are rare. Without rights and responsibilities, students are impassive, denied a voice and their willingness to examine a range of ideas is sharply curtailed.

*Tony Knight
Graduate School of Education
LaTrobe University, Bundoora 3083*

December 1994

YESTERDAY
15 years ago

from Connect Number 2, February 1980

Cross-Age Tutoring Princes Hill High School

Form 9R at Princes Hill High School in 1978 was randomly divided into two groups of nine members each. One group acted as individual tutors in reading to group of Year 7 students. The other group received individual tuition from Melbourne State College teachers studying post-graduate special education course.

It was hypothesised that there would be no significant difference in re-test scores on reading comprehension and self-esteem. While the tutor group increased self-esteem scores significantly (.01) and the group which received tutoring increased reading comprehension scores significantly (.05), when the two groups were compared, the respective increases were not significantly greater than the increase in the other group. Thus the major hypothesis was confirmed. Various reports, however, suggested that there were many positive aspects of the cross-age tutoring program, such as improved school attendance and greater motivation for learning. Also, the fact that the control group did not increase significantly on either reading comprehension or self-esteem tests suggests that

something different was happening in the treatment groups.

The tutees group did not improve more significantly than the control group on either test and while they were not disadvantaged by participation, greater emphasis could be placed on consultation with tutees in future programs.

In order to create a total learning environment, which is theoretically the major thrust of tutoring, more work needs to be done in gaining active participation of teachers and parents in the establishment and on-going development of the program.



COMMENTS:

1. In order to introduce an innovative program such as cross-age tutoring into a school, the planning phase is crucial. The innovator must get to know the people who will be involved in the implementation and acquaint them thoroughly with the plan in a non-threatening manner - ask for ideas and suggestions and be prepared to start in a very small way.
2. Sell the concept of action research. One of the major advantages of cross-age tutoring is the positive communication that is generated between people. Action-oriented research gets people evaluating what they are doing in an open, non-defensive way - thus allowing people to think aloud, talk straight, and act in a caring way towards other people.
3. Keep an open diary so that the innovator's negotiations can be part of the action research and available to other people who want to learn from others' experience before implementing a cross-age tutoring program.

Bob Semmens, North Carlton.



Reflections on the 15 Years Since the Cross-age Tutoring Project at Princes Hill Secondary College

**TODAY
1994**

Fifteen years ago it was important for me to establish whether a co-operative teaching method could get the same or different outcomes as the traditional, expert-led clinical approach to reading development. It seemed to me that students may be able to communicate better with students even if they lacked some of the skills of specially trained teachers. I wondered whether any differences could be measured. It was a one-off project to satisfy my curiosity. There were no significant differences although there was movement in the predicted direction. As the project did not become incorporated into the school's curriculum, there were no direct long term outcomes. This led me to think some more about the ways that schools are organised.

Since then I have become much more interested in learning environments. Other educators have also investigated the context for teaching - under what conditions will co-operative teaching styles be able to flourish? In the 1980s we had the **Integration Report** (1984) which emphasised inclusive schooling, we had debates on equal opportunity, and we had research on gender inclusive

curriculum. School communities became much more aware of barriers to learning for some students because of racism, sexism, and social background factors.

At Princes Hill, students, parents and teachers participated in the development of educational goals - intellectual, vocational, social, and personal. Then a code of behaviour was developed in the same way and clearly related to the educational aims. In this way, discipline came to be understood as a curriculum issue rather than a set of rules imposed by the school administration.

Since 1978, I have remained in contact with Princes Hill, some of the time as a parent. I have observed an interesting tension between cooperative learning and competitive individual achievement. The tension appears to produce an appreciation of everyone's efforts and achievements, which is much different from the aggressive individualism of my schooling in the 1950s. I have noticed this in other State schools as well.

The explanation may lie in the increase in interest in the ways that schools are organised to include all students, or teacher training and

professional development, or increased school-community interaction. It is impossible to estimate the influence of **Connect** in the more participatory approach to schooling. However, I believe that many teachers and schools have been encouraged to persevere with student participation projects because of the regular reporting of ideas and developments across Australia and elsewhere.

This encouragement must continue. In the new era of effective school management, when some aspects of school organisation are changing, there needs to be a voice for student participation. Effective school management and student participation are not mutually exclusive, but a policy of student participation will have to demonstrate that it attracts students to the school and that it provides value for money.

There is a very important role for **Connect** to play in publicising successful ways in which schools deal with accountability issues whilst maintaining their focus on best participatory practice.

*Bob Semmens, Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Education
Melbourne University*

CROSS-AGE TUTORING

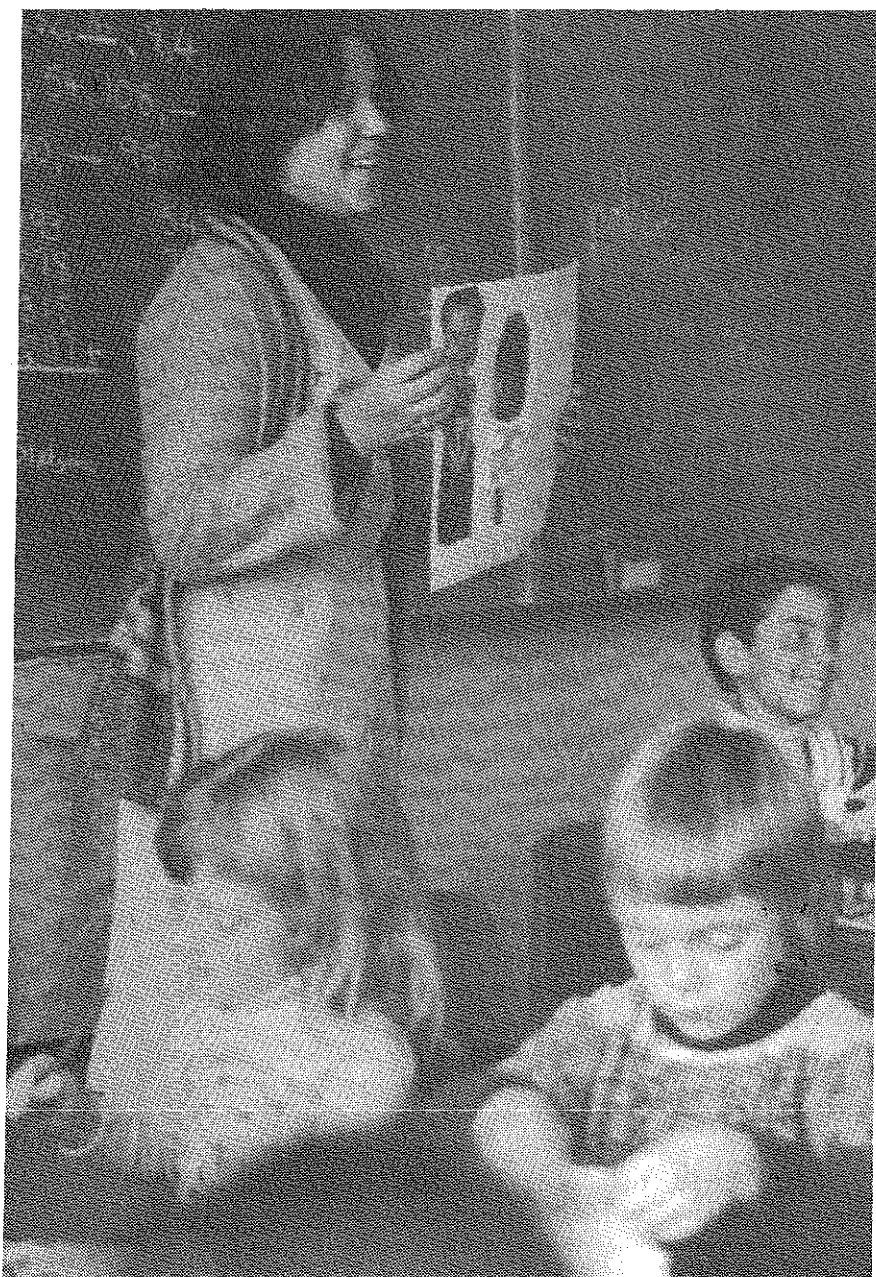
At Thomastown Primary School

At Thomastown Primary School, my multi-age 4/5/6 (with 24 children) has been involved with the Prep children in a language cross-age program.

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings, the tutors went down to the Preps for a 40 minute session. The tutors went in three groups of 8 children. Each group was of both sexes with a multi-ability emphasis. Each group went on the same day each week for the course of the year. No-one was allowed to drop out; it was therefore regarded as an integral part of our class and school activity.

The program commenced at Easter and continued through until the second last week of the school year. The Preps came up to our room for an Easter hunt for eggs and novelties and each tutor looked after the little ones and read stories (composed by themselves in prior class sessions). Children had all been involved in tutoring before, so the concept of the program only had to be revised, not introduced.

Only two children wished to opt out of the program and, by redirection, they became content with participation.



15 Years On: Congratulations to Roger and Connect magazine!

Connect has been an invaluable source of information and a stimulus for the active participation of students in a wide range of school and community activities.

When I became involved in cross-age tutoring at Thomastown PS in the late '70s, there was a certain sense of excitement at being part of an innovative program. Not only did the program foster close links between older and younger students, it also created a bond between the tutors and participating teachers. The fact that tutoring was regarded as part of the educational program on a weekly basis, meant that it achieved a credibility that would not have been established if *ad hoc* organisation had taken place.

Nowadays, cross-age tutoring is regarded as a normal part of the program of many schools. Various approaches have been utilised and many subject areas have been enriched by this interaction.

In recent years, as I have moved out of the classroom into an administrative position, I have not been actively involved in whole class participation in cross-age tutoring, but I have taken every opportunity to engage students from different areas of the school in mutually beneficial cross-age activities. In particular, I enjoy setting up a situation in which the students have to use their initiative to develop a plan of action, to implement a project and to evaluate its success. This has involved a range of activities, some simple and others complex. Whether the result is successful or not pales against the benefit of being part of the process. It has been evident that some ventures lend themselves to cross-age activity more than others, and it is possible to avoid frustration by knowing the capabilities and potential

TODAY
1994

YESTERDAY
15 years ago



CROSS AGE TUTORING

of participants. As happens in many aspects of life, practice enables expertise to develop. Hence if I wish to have older students who can interact effectively in a cross-age situation, I believe that I must give them adequate opportunities to trial their ideas, to talk about successful and less successful aspects and to consider ways of improving strategies.

I consider that I have moved my emphasis from the 'cross-age' factor to a 'cooperative' focus. I believe that our students need to learn the skills of mixing in a variety of group situations as they move through life. For this reason, I want them to see our school as part of the wider community and to view themselves as individuals having the ability to influence others.

I have a great faith in the young people coming through our schools. As I am approaching the end of my teaching career, I look at students who are technologically aware in a way that I will never be and I see students who have considered global issues related to countries that I'd never heard of as a child. However, I do have some concerns at the rapidity of change. I do hope that, in the midst of an educational scene that is placing emphasis on the key learning areas through LAPS, CSF, Course Advice etc etc, we are still able to engender wonder and enjoyment.

Thérèse West
Preston South Primary School

Each Monday afternoon a class session was taken by me in which we (the tutors) discussed the forthcoming program for the week and thrashed out any problems which had arisen. Children noted in their own Tutoring Recording Books what would be required of them. They also wrote their comments on the previous session. These directives were given by the three Prep teachers (who work in a Team Teaching situation). Therefore the work was specifically directed by the Preps' teachers and supervised by one of them at each session. If tutors needed assistance in the tutoring situation, they were encouraged to ask each other for support and/or to speak with these Prep teachers.

By constant consultation between the Prep teachers and myself, any necessary movement of tutors could take place. This happened rarely, as the situation worked very smoothly.

In our multi-cultural environment, at varying times tutors became interpreters, which afforded another strengthening link.

WHAT WAS THE SUBJECT MATTER?

Early in the year, the tutors acted as readers (eg of PM books). They would read a variety of stories with 2 or 3 tutees. Then they would discuss the story, revise any known words (no strong emphasis at this stage) and finally the tutees would draw a picture. Quickly the thematic approach developed sufficiently so that the tutors would lead the tutees into discussing experiential subjects such as 'I love', family, friends, then sometimes excursions. Sentences would grow (with varying degrees of success and complexity) and the tutors would act as scribes.

A variety of presentations helped stimulate the interest of tutees and tutors.

Sometimes work would go in Prep 'readers'; at other times, wall displays, models with signs, paintings on tables, resulted with an endless array of materials. But always the emphasis was placed on developing oral expression and an awareness of the printed word. Communication developed to such an extent that often the tutees would visit our room at playtimes and look for their older friends in the playground (sometimes they would be welcomed, occasionally 'fobbed off', but never rejected out of hand).

Towards the end of the year, we all went on an excursion to the Botanic Gardens by train. The relationship that had developed showed up remarkably. The older children shared the responsibility for the younger children in a most mature manner and, by the return trip home, some Preps were asleep leaning on or sitting on their tutors. Acceptance of each other proved to exist just as comfortably here as it had done in the class situation.

A final exciting conclusion came with the Preps visiting our room for a Christmas celebration. We had made small gifts (which had involved a considerable amount of work), and a dressed-up Father Christmas presented these gifts. Then the Preps surprised our tutors by giving them candles in pottery candle-holders (which they had made themselves) and thus the two-way communication reached its successful climax.

STRENGTHS

1. Cooperation;
2. Interaction with each other, teachers and tutees;
3. A great communication between two areas of the school and understanding of needs of others;
4. Teachers were able to speak and relate to tutors as 'friends' with a mutual interest;
5. Use of feature sessions eg Easter, Christmas.

WEAKNESSES (minimal)

1. Certain children with no reading age found difficulties, as Preps surpassed their abilities;
2. Certain personality conflicts between tutors and tutees occasionally occurred;
3. Availability of time for teachers to communicate could be a difficulty, but it was not a problem with us because we were familiar with each others' approach and all shared a common outlook ie language experience was a common philosophy at both of our levels.

Thérèse West, Thomastown Primary School
from: *Connect* Number 2, February 1980

SRCs, Governance and Networks

Dear Connect,

As an interested, involved and concerned member of the student body of Bathurst High School, I would like to congratulate the producers of CONNECT for an excellent publication. I am a member of the Bathurst High SRC, RASG and am on the RASG-IYY Committee. I have just read the latest issue of CONNECT and I am very impressed. The articles are very informative, diverse and helpful.

At present, our SRC is seen by staff, students and the councillors as simply a puppet organisation - controlled by the Principal of our school, used only for fund-raising and with no real power in decision making within the running of our school. The SRC and staff run as two completely different organisations with little or no interaction. Myself and a few other concerned members of the staff and student body are attempting to make our SRC into an organisation that can properly honour its two main constitutional aims: to represent the rights of the student body and to improve student/teacher relationships. We feel that in order to do this, the SRC and staff need to work together on decisions within the school which affect the student body. The students should know that they have the right to the best possible education.

The articles in CONNECT have given us some clues as to how to go about obtaining these reforms and recognising our rights. If anyone has any extra ideas on how we can make our SRC a better representative of the students' rights and opinions, please contact us. Again, congratulations on a great publication.

*Kate Conolan, year 9
Bathurst High School SRC, Bathurst High
School, Bathurst NSW 2795*

from Connect Number 30; December 1984

YESTERDAY
10 years ago

Dear Kate,

Kind Kate, kinky Kate, caring and fiery Kate. Your letter from the past reminds me of many things: your (and our) youth, your (and our) idealism, your (and our) naïve belief that systems would respond to well-intentioned actions. Most of all, your letter evokes images of your and our enthusiasms. You, I hope, were not tamed, even as the systems we fought together to change tamed and nearly destroyed us.

In those not so long ago but a world away days of RASG (Regional Association of Student Government), most things were possible. If they weren't possible, they were at least worth trying. We tried - and nearly succeeded - to develop a sense of regional student identity. We tried - and genuinely enjoyed - working as colleagues (whether adult or student, we were all 'staff' with, I trust, an equal voice in the directions we were taking).

We even tried (oh yes, I remember it well; do you Roger?) to go overseas - and to bring the overseas, in the form of the National Association of Student Councils (USA), over here. They are into their sixth decade of responsible and well-supported student government. Where are we? And where are you now Kate? Are you overseas? Or are you here still aiming to make sense of systems and create comradeship out of chaos?

Do you remember Kate, how we also tried (and tried and tried and tried) to set in motion a regional and state network which would support students and staff in schools to recognise the fundamental and potentially invaluable role SRCs could take in making public schools better, more relevant places in which to work?

We didn't succeed, but others did - one likes to think as a result of our example. New South Wales now has had an annual state SRC conference every year since 1987. NSW now - since 1992 - has had a group of 20 students - the NSW SRC - representing all 10 regions' SRC networks to the Minister for Education and attempting to follow up the Conference recommendations. NSW has some regions with highly developed structures and conferences which focus on relevant educational issues and enable students to take part in regional decision-making.

New South Wales does now have some schools (your old one is becoming one) where staff and students operate in an environment wherein the groups making decisions include student leaders as colleagues. The School Council, the Year Management Teams and the Quality Assurance Review Committee are three that come to mind most recently. The state has SRCs in some schools which do more than raise money. (But, fortunately, yours is doing that also, and therefore will have more power to do things as a result.) It has some Principals and Directors of Schools (hey, maybe we're just lucky?) who ensure that students are in demand to serve on committees and undertake roles of responsibility within the school, the region and the state.

New South Wales also still has students as committed now as you were then Kate. Well, perhaps not **quite** as committed. There've been lots of changes you wouldn't recognise - much more local-based decision-making, global budgeting, expanded course options, a flexible approach to HSC study, much more work, much more play. Aye, there's the rub Kate. There's much more work for students as well as we adult staff. There are also a lot more attractions, within and outside of school. SRC is only one of the many, many things students may choose to commit themselves to. Most still do not.

TODAY
1994

But then, Kate, they never did. Remember? It wasn't just the Principal and the staff who manipulated the strings of your puppet organisation. Even in those sometimes glorious days (International Youth Year promised so much, but delivered so little, eh? So what else is new?) there were those students who wouldn't even watch Punch and Judy, no matter how entertaining you were. And now the Judies at least (there still aren't many boys involved) are being asked to be enlightening as well?

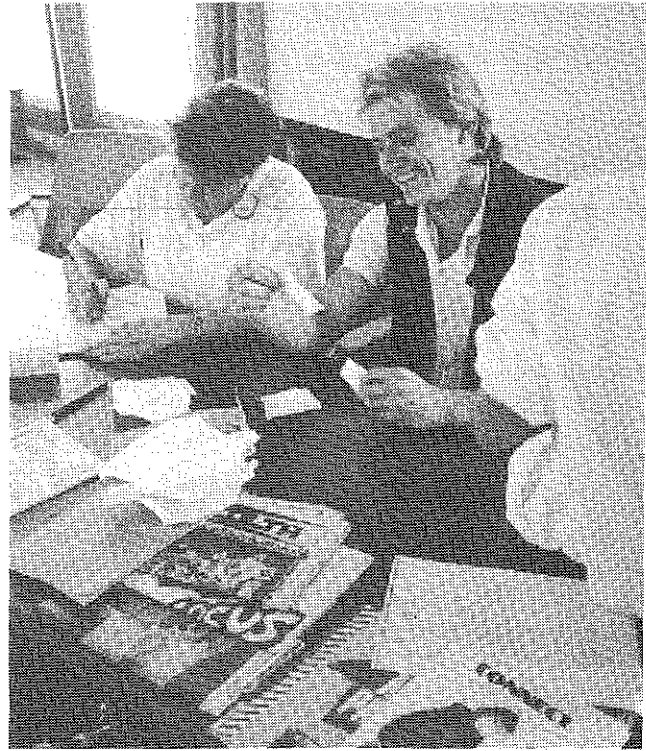
Come on. Get real. Things are better - considerably better. But people still have a long, long way to go, most significantly those student 'people'. Student leadership still has an appallingly low profile amongst students. SRCs (including your own now more powerful Bathurst High descendent) need to put the 'body' back into the student body. The puppet show is over Kate. But your audience is watching computer games.

Yes, things have changed, but some things also remain the same. I'm still here. So's Roger. We're older, but not necessarily wiser. Like you, I also congratulate **Connect** on a wonderful, relevant and, most importantly, durable publication. But, like you that decade ago, he and I - and we trust - also all you committed readers - are still seeking those interested, involved and concerned members of the student body.

Will it be the same in 15 years? Hope not. There's too much potential out there, Kate, for so many to continue to wallow in apathy. In the words of that famous movie (well, it was famous to us then, and is still available): "Let's do it - TOGETHER!"

*Charles Kingston, Bathurst ERC SRC Coordinator
Bathurst High School, Bathurst NSW 2795*

December 1994



JUNIOR SCHOOL COUNCILS

YESTERDAY 5 years ago

In Connect 61 (February 1990), we continued to report on Junior School Councils (JSCs) in Primary Schools. This issue and the following one outlined the training program developed for JSCs:

Many primary schools in Victoria have recently set up Junior School Councils. These JSCs have various structures; in some cases, only senior (grade 5 and 6) students are members; in other cases, students are elected from grades across the whole school.

These JSCs also vary considerably in their links with what happens in classrooms. Some are starting to consider issues such as reporting back and getting ideas and directions from other students, the nature of what is learnt and how learning takes place, school rules etc. Others are grappling more with the first steps of becoming established.

Why have such Councils developed? In some cases, the training days ... have been catalyst events for schools that had been thinking about forming JSCs - and came along to report their first meeting and gain ideas about 'where to now?'

The JSCs are partly seen as a 'natural' flow-on from the democratic decision making reflected in the 'senior' School Councils (in Victorian Government schools), representing parents, teachers and the community; they are also partly seen as an extension of the participation of students in secondary schools in Student Representative Councils (SRCs).

More broadly, JSCs reflect an interest in developing student voices in the decision making of schools - in response to Victorian Ministry of Education commitments in this area - through formal as well as more informal classroom based approaches. The JSCs recognise that part of education is concerned with assuring students that it is important that they have views

about issues that affect them, and that they will be taken seriously in holding and presenting such views, and considering and understanding the views of others. Schools also report other reasons - the development of confidence and self-esteem and skill development in democratic decision-making processes.

Some of the schools regard it as important that all students be actively involved in such decision making, and hence have adopted measures that rotate representation amongst class members rather than continue with the same representatives for the year. In fact, it would seem that such rotation is more generally true in primary schools than it is in secondary schools, where the continuation of a representative role for an individual is regarded (usually) with greater importance.

This rotation, however, has implications for the nature of the training sessions, for one cannot always assume that the students attending have been the ones previously involved. New students, in fact, have different needs - principally for basic skills and for sharing information between schools about 'ways to do it', rather than 'moving on' to the next development stage...



Many students join the student council when they are in primary or lower secondary school.

TODAY 1994

(Maree Reddan taught at Gowerville Primary School and is now JSC Coordinator at Preston West Primary School.)

Over the years, I've worked with a few Junior School Councils. Although each JSC varies in the way it operates, the underlying principles, I believe, remain the same for each. They are:

- representation;
- supportive teaming;
- communication;
- taking on responsibilities;
- empowerment of individuals, groups and ultimately, the wider student body.

It is always a positive experience to work with Junior School Councillors who see their role as a valued one within the school community. Valuing each contribution or report from a grade level with recognition and discussion is fundamental. The importance of communicating regularly and clearly from meeting to class group and back is also vital. Younger Junior School Councillors learn a lot from working with older students and, of course, the same is true for the more experienced older students when working with the younger Junior School Councillors in their schools.

One question representatives need to ask often is: WHY DO WE NEED A JSC? When we clarify the roles, the group becomes a really focused JSC, able to set itself goals for the year. I have seen some fantastic work done throughout whole schools, which Junior School Councils have initiated. For example:

- the fair use of playground space (school surveys, discussions, reports etc);
- reviewing school welfare and discipline, emphasising positive statements;

JSCs and the Democratic Process:

- safety measures, especially relating to playground equipment, play areas etc (shaded regions/suitable games in certain areas etc);
- addressing students' feelings and reactions to recent closures and amalgamations through language work (newspaper articles, surveys etc);
- and so on ...

Just wonderful initiatives!

So, it becomes a truly empowering experience for each Junior School Councillor and a genuine listening develops for the representative body and its role. This, in turn, gives each grade level a voice, a time and a place to be heard. The Junior School Council then assumes a very important role within the school for all students.

To be an individual student with a great idea is fine; to share your idea with your school through your JSC can be inspirational! It is your involvement and contribution which makes the big difference.

On the days when Junior School Councillors have opportunities to share ideas within their network together, many Junior School Councillors come away from discussions highly motivated, with many fresh ideas ready to share back at their own schools. This certainly was the case after the last in-service held recently (November 16th, 1994) at Merrilands Primary School. Preston West Junior School Councillors are now planning a radio program, after listening to other Junior School Councillors (from Preston East PS) share their expertise on the subject.

It is always a responsibility and a commitment to become a member of your JSC, but the benefits and rewards of good school communication are felt by your whole school community every day!

Keep up the great work, Junior School Councillors!

Maree Reddan, JSC Coordinator,
Preston West Primary School,
Murray Road, Preston 3072

It all happened on Wednesday 15th November (1989). Students, teachers, parents, School Council representatives, State Government representatives and members of other school organisations gathered at the Preston Council Chambers to participate in activities on student democracy and political processes.

Michael Leighton, the local Member of Parliament for Preston was there. Unfortunately, he had to leave early but he did take time to explain to everyone where his office is, what his job entails and how to go about contacting him.

Roger Holdsworth was there again, as he had been on three other occasions. During an activity that was introduced by Roger, everybody had to find their partner by asking a series of questions about the sticker that was placed on their back. Each person was only allowed to answer 'yes' or 'no'. BLACK had to find WHITE; DAY had to find NIGHT; BATMAN had to find ROBIN etc.

Everybody was divided into discussion groups. Members of the panel joined in. Some people were in Elvire Bucher's group - Elvire is an Electorate Officer and worked for Brian Howe. Some people were in Ally Cashmore's group - Ally is a member of the Student Representative Council for Lalor North High School. Some people were in Anne Murphy's group - Anne is the Mayor of Preston. Some were in Pat Reeve's group - Pat used to be a parent representative on the State Board of Education. Others were in Joan Burrow's group - Joan is School Council President at Preston Primary School.

Every student was given the chance to ask questions of the panel representatives - about their jobs as representatives, how long they had been doing it, whether they got paid, if they enjoyed it etc.

A student from each group introduced the panel members, who sat at the top end of the room at a large official-looking table. Scott was chosen to introduce Pat Reeve. As each panel member was introduced, they talked about their jobs.

Leah Hutchinson from Gowerville Primary School made an

excellent speech thanking all the members of the panel for their part in the Junior School Council activity.

After morning tea, people were divided into two groups. One group was taken on a tour of the Council Chambers with the Mayor. Students and teachers sat around the Chambers and were given the chance to experience what it might be like to be a Council Member.

In the other room, students participated in a game called 'Challenge'. The object of the game was to identify the representative by placing the correct name to the correct photo. At the end of the game, students were given an activity sheet to take back to their schools.

Joe Corbett from Waterdale School Support Centre was there. He took everybody through an activity using the Parliament Pack. Discussion groups took place again and things were written down on butchers paper. The activity took about 40 minutes, by which time it was time for a lunch break.

Sandwiches, bananas and apples were soon eaten by everyone.

Twelve thirty pm and time to return to school. It was a great morning's activity enjoyed by all students, teachers, panel members, Joe from Waterdale, Roger, Margaret, Mark and Julie.

Further Junior School Council activities will be planned for 1990.

Michael Malina, Leah Hutchinson and Sam Pasquale
Gowerville Primary School
with Julie Walton
Preston East School Community Development Network

from Connect Number 60, December 1989

The JSC Network in the area is still in operation. Funding cuts have meant that inter-school activities now occur only once a year.

(It should be noted that Gowerville Primary School has been closed, that Preston Council has been amalgamated into the City of Darebin and the elected Councillors replaced by Commissioners, Waterdale School Support Centre is closed, and the State Board of Education and the School Community Development Program have been abolished.)

NEWS AND REVIEWS

Students Present SA Workshop

On September 20th, the South Australian Consultative Advisory Committee (of **Kids Help Line**) hosted a workshop with a difference! In keeping with **Kids Help Line's** role as a strong advocate for children and young people, we invited groups of students from three schools to play a major role in the planning and presentation of the day's program. The theme: **What kids are saying about families**, was designed to give adults an opportunity to listen to some of the concerns **Kids Help Line** callers express about their families, and to discuss what could be done to improve things.

A group of year 9 drama students from Fremont High School worked with data collected by **KHL** counsellors and devised a number of dramatic scenarios depicting some of the problems young people face. Issues such as the effect on children of separation, divorce and reconstituted families, violence within families, and frustration over communication problems were raised. The impact of these messages on the audience was extremely powerful.

Members of the Banksia Park High School Student Representative Council then drew out some of the major issues and convened discussion groups for the various adult interest groups represented - parents, educators, service providers and policy makers. The questions they posed were searching one, ensuring that the participants thought carefully about the rationale behind our current practice, and our ways of expressing ourselves and promoting our services to young people.

Another highlight of the day was the magnificent lunch - catered for by students from Salisbury East High School.

The only disappointment was that there were not more adult participants. Those who did attend are still talking about the impact of the day, and the immense value of seeing a young person's perspective in this Year of the Family.

We intend to pursue further opportunities for this to happen - hopefully for a wider audience. Our heartfelt thanks go to the students involved for their honesty, hard work and enthusiasm, and to the school staff who supported and encouraged them.

*from Kids Help Line, November 1994
(PO Box 376, Red Hill Q 4059)*

Landscaping at Bayside SC

Our school grounds and playing areas at Bayside Secondary College (Altona Campus, Victoria) consist of bitumen in every direction. During our year 10 Technology Studies class, our teacher, John Malley, asked if we were interested in converting one small bitumen area into a landscaped one.

We said that we were very keen and commenced by drawing up a plan of action for designated areas and equipment that would be required. Having a zero budget, our teacher wrote a 'new program' submission to the School Council requesting funds to purchase basic equipment.

We decided that the planning would take the form of a passive garden area where all the members of the school community would be able to enjoy free time in a quiet and pleasant environment.

We commenced writing to local nurseries, timber yards, the Local Council, tool hire companies, the Student Representative Council and soil and garden suppliers.

All of our letter writing was done during class and lunchtimes in Ms Brown's (the Publicity Officer) office on her computer. We felt really good about being trusted with this important task.

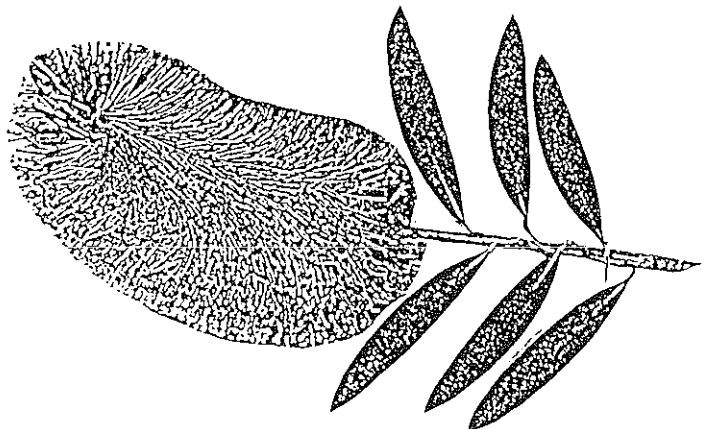
As a result of our letter writing, Mr John Brown from the Altona Rotary Club offered to cut the bitumen after the area was designed and set out. Since then the bitumen has been removed by Mr Don Chilcroft, local cartage operator.

Soil has been placed in position and grass seed has been sown. We are now investigating the prices of a watering system.

After we advertised in the school paper, many people brought in Australian natives. The SRC was able to give us some money through the annual school fete.

Students are using the area, which has several chairs and a table. More furniture and rubbish containers are being made by the Technology Studies Department. The feedback from the students has been very positive and they are enjoying the area.

*from SCIP Newsletter (Red Cross - Victoria)
November 1994*



NSW State SRC Conference

"Working As One"

Students and teachers from every NSW region assembled at Vision Valley early in August for a week long State SRC Conference that addressed many issues of interest and concern to students.

Opened by Dr Alan Laughlin, Assistant Director General, Metropolitan North Region, the conference included keynote addresses from highly motivating speakers such as Barbara Holborow, Children's Magistrate, who spoke on the theme 'Making a Difference'. Barbara received a standing ovation from students following her address encouraging them to take on the responsibility of making a difference, using education as a building block to awareness and understanding. "When you go back to your schools, know that you are our hope, our future," Ms Holborow said.

Other speakers included Kevin Gardner, State HIV/AIDS Advisor. Kevin brought with him people living with HIV and AIDS, including foster mum, Sue Jones, who is caring for twin boys whose parents are deceased as a result of

contracting the virus. One of the twins, now seven years old, also has the virus. Listening to such personal accounts of what it is like to live with HIV, allowed students to reflect on the personal impact of the disease.

Keynote speaker, psychologist and youth worker, Peter Slattery, encouraged students to have a positive outlook and to look at life from many different perspectives. Peter summed up perhaps the whole tone of the conference with "Give people enough rope and they'll skip!"

The Coordinator of the State Conference, Susan White, Regional Student Welfare/Drug Education Consultant, has received many messages expressing how much participants, visitors and presenters enjoyed and benefited from their involvement. Congratulations must go to the working party of students, teachers and regional office staff whose efforts ensured the conference was a success.

*from Regional Bulletin
NSW Metropolitan North Region*



ACSA Curriculum '95 Biennial Conference

Call for Workshops and Papers

Enclosed with this issue of **Connect** is a call for workshops and papers for the Australian Curriculum Studies Association Biennial Conference, **Curriculum '95**, to be held in Melbourne from 11th to 14th July 1995.

Note that all proposals for papers and workshops need to be submitted by 3 February 1995.

Your attention is drawn to the article on page 20 of this issue. Practical papers on school programs - particularly on student participation programs - and papers presented jointly by and/or with students, would be most welcome!!

CLEARINGHOUSE

Local and Overseas Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on:

(03) 489 9052 or (03) 344 8585

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

SCIP Newsletter (Student Community Involvement Program, Red Cross, Vic) November 1994

Youth Options (Youth Bureau, ACT) Oct 1994

Curriculum Perspectives (ACSA, Belconnen, ACT) Vol 14 No 4, November 1994

Rights Now! (NCYLC, NSW) Vol 2 No 4 Nov 1994

Overseas:

Foxfire News (Foxfire Fund, Georgia, USA) September/October 1994

National Coalition News (National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, New Mexico, USA) Vol 19 No 1, Summer 1994

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- 'Youth Radio' issue of 3CR's **CRAM Guide** (1985) (\$1) \$
- Democratic Decision Making in Schools - Victorian PEP (1987) (\$3) \$
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- Foxfire: 25 Years (Doubleday) (\$25) \$
- A Foxfire Christmas (Doubleday hardcover) (\$25) \$
- Shining Moments - Foxfire video (1 hour) (loan for 1 week: \$5) \$
- SRC Pamphlets Set (6 pamphlets; Youth Affairs Council of Victoria) (\$5) \$
- Photocopies of the following documents: \$
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